

THE WOMEN

A man may occasionally give his wife a kid 33 432
to sell but otherwise chickens and eggs are her only source of 434
cash income.

The huts which protect the Sarakatsani from the weather and 342
the curiosity of other families, are of two principal kinds, circu- 462
lar and domed (κυρλωτά), or rectangular and 'arched' (ἀψιδωτά).
Except that in the case of rectangular huts the men help the
women to erect the posts and crossbeams the building of the
hut is entirely the work of women. They cut, select, and tie into
position the pliable but strong branches which form the frame-
work of the circular hut. They collect, dress, and tie on to the
wooden skeleton the bundles of reeds, grasses, or ferns with
which the hut is thatched. They level the floor inside and plas- 237 ●
ter both the floor and the walls to a height of three feet with a
mixture of mud and mule-dung. They form the central hearth.
Five or six women working continuously are able to erect a hut 467
of conventional size* in two to three days, although it will have 476
taken them at least as many days to find and prepare their
materials.

The treatment of the wool from which the Sarakatsani make 236
the greater part of their clothing and all their blankets is also, 462
naturally, in the hands of the women. The wool is divided into
three categories according to the fineness and length of the
staple. It is washed in hot water and beaten with a wooden
implement to free it from surplus grease. After the wool has 283
been dried in the sun and disentangled with a carding tool 236
(λανόρι) it is spun by hand from a distaff (ρόχα). This is a
lengthy process and when a woman's hands are not otherwise
employed she is either spinning or knitting. Finally, the spun 286
thread is woven into cloth on the simple wooden loom which the 227
women operate continuously during the months of August and
September when the flocks and the shepherds make fewer
demands on their energies. On the loom are made the blankets,
the shepherd's capes woven from a mixture of wool and goats'
hair, and the cloth for jackets, skirts, and trousers. Today pro- 294
fessional village or town tailors cut and sew the suits of the men,
but the cloth remains their own. Only shoes, shirts, and cotton 291
material (for the young girls' dresses at the summer festivals) are 432
bought from the shops of Jannina and other towns.

* A circular hut for a family of 6 or 7 adults generally has a diameter of
14 or 15 feet. Height and diameter are approximately the same.

114 lavished on these books. A third volume is in preparation — the great task, alas, has been delayed by ill health — which promises to be the most interesting of the three.

114 The author is now advanced in years, and the
178 bulk of her exploration, perforce, was undertaken
115 some time ago, and many of the nomads among
whom her researches began were chosen on account of their age and their long memories. Since then, the agents of detribalization, of which the author writes so sadly, have been hard at work. The last quarter of a century has probably done more than the last three thousand years to change the traditional life of the Sarakatsáns. It is amazing that so many clans have remained intact. Yet even among these, which are fortunately still the majority by far, the last few decades have taken toll of many ancient ways. The life described, then, in *I Sarakatsáni* is truer of forty years ago, when the nomads still had no documents or *état civil*, and when schools, state religion, taxes, and military service were unknown to them, than of today. It is a record of their life before the virus of disintegration attacked them, and a fascinating and curious picture it presents.

221 The pre-Christian legacy, all over Greece, is
239 never far from the surface. Among the Sarakatsáns pagan magic survives in a yet more pronounced shape, and the superstructure of Christian form, owing to the remoteness of the nomads from the normal sources of doctrine and practice, is correspondingly more shaky.

296 Traditionally, in Sarakatsán dogma there is no awareness of the existence of the Trinity: God the Father and Jesus are considered the same Person, and He is known as *Aí*, which is a dialect abbreviation of *ayios* (*hagios*), the word for "saint" or "holy one." Sometimes He is known as *Proto Aí*, or "First among the Saints," and sometimes as *Aphenti*, "the Lord," from the ancient Greek word *authentes*. All over Greece, the army of saints has taken the place of the ancient polytheistic pantheon. This is especially true among the nomads; *Aí's* status is only a little higher than that of the first among His peers, and, as one would expect in a severely masculine and patriarchal society, male saints have cornered the high places in this celestial company. But their numbers have been drastically reduced: only a handful, from the thousands of Orthodox saints who overlap and crowd each other in the villagers' calendars and the synaxary, have found their way into the wigwams.

226 All the usual Panhellenic spirits — Pagan or
289 Airy Ones, Exotics, Shadowy Ones, vampires, werewolves, dragons, ghosts, and the Kallikantzaros centaur — people the Sarakatsán cosmogony and infest the folds. They can be exorcised by counterspells and baffled by phylacteries of dogs'

226 droppings; and a dried snake's head, hidden in a church for forty days and then retrieved, is sovereign against many baleful manifestations. To the Nereids, a danger for all lonely shepherds near pools and streams, young Sarakatsáns are particularly exposed. They are often struck dumb and robbed of their wits by chancing on the Nereid revels and dances, just as mortals were sometimes turned into trees if they had the bad luck to blunder on the dances of the nymphs. There have been many mixed nomad-Nereid marriages, and many a healthy Sarakatsán baby has been stolen from its hanging cradle and replaced by the sickly changeling of one of these water maidens.

Demons of every kind and gender dog the nomads' footsteps up hill and down dale and "chase them into woods." They are the special target of some female supernatural beings called the *Kalotyches* ("the good fortunes") — like the name *Eumenides* ("the kindly ones") for the Furies, a wry, placating misnomer — who are half women, half she-asses, and snake-locked, like Medusa. They plague the flocks and bring bad luck at lambing time and childbed, and they are especially to be feared during the forty days following the birth of a nomad baby.

By far the darkest villain in Sarakatsán demonology is a male spirit known as the *Daoutis*. *Daoutis*, sometimes called Pans, are the wildest, strongest, and wickedest of them all. Shaped like satyrs, with half-goat, half-human bodies and long legs with cleft hooves, they have the heads of rams with large

[22] twirling horns. Along with certain other demons, *Daoutis* are most dangerous to flocks at three seasons of the year: during Advent, just before lambing; in late April or early May, as the shepherds prepare to leave their winter quarters for the mountains; and from the feast of the Transfiguration until the end of August. They are prone, during these bad periods, to swoop, shrieking like birds of prey, on the cowering flocks, and after two or three of these onslaughts, the beasts begin to perish, sometimes a dozen at a time; they

[825] swell up and die. Sliced tortoise meat is used as a counterspell, and the shepherds shift camp at once. If they can find a priest, he sprinkles the new site with holy water, and the sheep's bells are taken off and blessed. Unlike most wicked spirits, *Daoutis* do not flinch from attacking in broad daylight, and possessing the knack of making friends with the dogs, they pad along after the flocks unmolested. Therefore, when an emergency fold is built, the dogs are left behind and fires are lit to make a magic circle of smoke. *Daoutis* also pick up the Christian names of mortals; so the shepherds, if they hear anyone calling them, hold their tongues — answering might rob them of the power of speech for good. These terrible spirits

/26 cont./

222 Wood, insofar as it is the chief material for industry and
313 building; insofar as it is the only fuel for cooking and heating.
824

312 Edible plants used for food. It is necessary to add to these
the medicinal plants, the basis of traditional therapy.

Grass of the pastures, necessary for the flocks.

Finally, water.

128 /27/ For reasons of synthesis, the details of this process
(selection of species, persons charged with this task, etc.) will
be examined farther on.

Sarakatsani Crafts

121 The concrete form in which the problem of industries presents it-
self for the Sarakatsani has of three aspects: raw materials, power
sources used, tools.

237 The principal raw materials are: wood, wool and skins, hence
824 fibrous and pliant substances of vegetable or animal origin. (3)

3. For our terminology see: A. Leroi-Gourhan,

L'homme et la matière, pp. 178, 234 and 235.

325 One might conclude from the foregoing that the Sarakatsani are
323 ignorant of metals, pottery and basketry. This conclusion is valid
285 only in the last two instances.

323 As a matter of fact, the nomadic life does not permit the
maintenance of terra cotta utensils, the fragility of which would
be put to a severe test during the travels. Moreover, their manufacture
would require more or less stable installations (special ovens, some-
times pottery wheels, sets of tools, etc.), specialized and sedentary
personnel who could occupy themselves continually with this, finally
a relatively high level of technical knowledge (knowledge of various
qualities of clay, of the peculiar properties of heat, etc.). Nothing
seems less compatible with Sarakatsani life than such an industry.
Furthermore, a certain volume of production would be required to make it
profitable, and that, in turn, would require the establishment of means of
transportation and considerable commercial relations with the outside.
Let us say further that nothing would be less justified than to see

/27 cont./

323 among our herders the developmental technique so foreign to their major occupations.

285 On the other hand, we are not in a position to formulate analogous hypotheses to explain the non-existence of basket-making in this society.

325 As far as metals are concerned, the Sarakatsani use metal objects
[439] which they do not produce themselves, but which they buy in trade. We shall speak of these in connection with their use and acquisition. However, the Sarakatsani make metal blades for themselves and from these they make small cutting tools for woodwork.

284 /28/ The Sarakatsani likewise use another category of raw
237 materials; these are substances used for their chemical properties:
[386] coloring, cleansing or causing fermentation; or even substances of vegetables or animal origin (plants, residues from the working of
[381] wool, etc.); serving as agglutinins for dyes. However, glues for joining wood are unknown, and they use plant cords (wicker, rushes, etc.).

37 Power used is limited to fire, running water and the muscular strength of men and animals (this last only for transport).

322 The necessary equipment includes instruments, tools and sometimes very simple machines; they are made almost exclusively of wood, generally by the Sarakatsani themselves.

[128] The description of this equipment, as well as that of the procedures followed for its utilization will be presented always for the sake of systematization, in connection with each type of Sarakatsani industry.

Wood Craft

The purpose of Sarakatsani woodcraft is chiefly to make objects a) for their personal use (furniture, utensils, etc.), and b) for use in other craft industries (tools and equipment).

412 Before examining these products we must see what kind of tools and wood are used for their manufacture.

Let us first look at the tools--these are: hatchet, adze, knives.

/92 cont./

232 which permits him to reach the brain and the cyst. With a hook

(413) (small elongated implement ending in a kind of hook) he removes

● (237) the cyst, replaces the bone, covers the spot of entry with beeswax and applies a dressing. After several days the wound heals and the animal recovers.

The safety of the livestock

233 The serious enemies of the flocks are wild beasts (chiefly wolves),
(685) on the one hand, and livestock thieves on the other. (A short time
(577) ago, the latter were very numerous, this type of theft being considered a virtue among herders. Against them Sarakatsani keep large dogs,
(231) very savage and very dangerous. These dogs do not hesitate to grapple with wolves, and it is for this reason that their masters put around their necks a collar studded with iron points.

Moreover, the shepherds always see to it that the flock /93/ does not disperse, for the strayed animals become the specific prey of wolves and thieves. This task is easier when there is a ram or a buck in the flock, since these animals act as the center of attraction for the livestock (ewes and she-goats). Moreover, the sound of their
(534) bells (they are huge, some weighing several kilograms) always gives the signal for reassembly of the flock by a conditioned reflex mechanism. This mechanism is so effective that even in the darkest nights the shepherds succeed in regrouping their animals by ringing these bells. /Fig. 74 appears here/

Seasonal migrations

221 The seasonal migrations involve the following arrangements:

233 At a designated hour, always before dawn, the women set to work;

484 entrusted with the preparations, they gather up the equipment and load
361 it on the backs of the beasts of burden. The men, for their part,
(462) "take care of the livestock." When everything is ready, human beings, beasts of burden and flock form a column in the order laid down by tradition. The flocks surrounded by shepherds and dogs set out first.

/270 cont./

600 burned bit of the father's cloak. The first excrements of the newborn
751 child are kept and transformed into an amulet. An amulet meant always
789 to protect the child is made from the excrements of a dog.
[237]

[825] All these measures put the child in contact with the mysterious
forces that dwell in the body of the mother and the father and that have
given it life, or with the warding-off properties of the dog /271/ (a
being capable of forcing back the evil spirits) (61).

[191] 61. The beliefs pertaining to the caul and the dog also
existed in the Byzantine epoch. See 'Ls. TZETZIS: *Explan...* vers 88 et 27.
--Moreover, everything dealing with the woman
in childbirth, her excrements, her clothing, transmit vitality.
The physician ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΔΕ ΤΡΑΛΛΕΩΝ
I, 437, says that sick people gave their shirts to a parturient
to wear; after her confinement they got them back and put
them on again in order to be restored to health. On blood,
the source of life, see

Ἰατρικὴ τοῦ Νικητοῦ: "Amulettes and Talismans" *Actes du Congrès* M. P. G. 88.

[392] The regenerative fire represented by the ashes also must not be forgotten
though the role of the latter is not limited to this.

844 In general, visits to the woman in childbirth and to the child are
574 forbidden. Those who enter may bring evil spirits with them. That is why
789 one hangs on the door of the hut a tuft of red wool--this color having
[822] warding-off properties; (62)

[302] 62. Van der Leeuw: *Ibid.*, p. 203. Colors are treated as powers
[191] ...Red, for example, is the only color everywhere used to
paint the body (Grosse: *Die Aufänge* /sic/ /should read: *Anfänge*/
der Kunst, 58 f.). In popular beliefs red is a color that
protects against evils and the evil eye:

Ἰατρικὴ τοῦ Νικητοῦ M. P. G. 81, 105 et commen-
taires de Dr. ΚΥΡΙΑΚΙΔΟΥ: 'Ο Ἰατρὴς: *Χρονολογικὴ ἀνασκόπησις*, p. 624. —
N. HOATHE: *Ibid.*, p. 200 et suiv. — E. SAPANTHE: *Τὰ φάρμακα τῆς ἰατρικῆς*,
p. 80-82, etc.

844 /271 cont./

844 likewise, burning charcoal is placed upon the threshold and, from time to
 844 time, grains of incense are tossed upon it. All who enter are subjected
 789 to purifying fumigation. The same desire to keep away "evils," causes
 (783) /the Sarakatsani/ to throw into the hearth an old shoe or a piece of
 coarsely woven wool which give off malodorous fumes.

846 Forty days after the birth, mother and child, soiled by the child-
 783 birth, must submit to purification. The hut is thoroughly cleaned, the
 789 mother and child carefully bathed. Then both betake themselves to the
 (788) nearest Church where the priest, in accordance with the Orthodox rite,
 blesses them (in commemoration of the presentation of the Lord to the
 temple, according to old Hebraic customs which recall the universal taboos
 (842) of birth). A boy accompanies them so that other boys will be born into
 the family.

751 The health of boys is likewise ensured by another method. On Easter
 789 Sunday at dawn each head of a family kills the paschal lamb which will
 (527) then be roasted on the spit. The moment the blood runs, he wets his fingers
 with it and draws a cross on the forehead of boys "so that they do not
 become anemic." (63)

63. According to the explanation of Madame Hadjimichali:

Ibid., A.I. 445.

The amulets, too, afford a protection against evils, and that in a
 lasting fashion. We have given some particulars concerning their composi-
 tion, which varies/272/ greatly and constitutes a veritable bréviary of all
 the Sarakatsani magic beliefs. On an amulet necklace worn by a child
 (237) (see figure 101) we found: a miniature of the Gospel which is sold at
 all the village fairs; a blue ball on which was fastened a small cross;
 a cross of mastic; a small bag filled with /Figure 101 appears here/ salt
 and incense; a medal struck with the image of the Virgin; a coin; a bag
 containing a wing bone of a bat; a ball of amber; a cowrie /porcelain/
 (shell of Venus); finally, the weight from a fairy's spindle, carved in
 gabbro.

/271 cont./

751
789
(237)



Fig. 101

/272 cont./

(237)
(224)

On another amulet we discovered, in addition to the objects enumerated above, a scapula of a tortoise and three shoots of thorny shrubs. And on another, instead of the cowrie, a crab's claw.

The symbolism of these objects is more or less known to us. Gospel, medal and cross (divine forces), salt, incense, thorny shrub and fairy weight (against supernatural beings and a means of dominating the fairies), cowrie and crab (aquatic beings, hence lunar, promoting fecundity), turtle (terrestrial force) superimposed and combined to the same end. The coin /273/ is a beneficent talisman and protector known since the late Middle Ages in Byzantium. (64) The amber ball has the same meaning, but was 64. At first, the coins struck by Alexander the Great were regarded as charms. Then, coins of Emperor Constantine the Great, which bore the cross. See B. Schmith: Der böse Blick, p. 602. --D. Loukatos: Ibid., p. 15. Even today it is customary to offer coins of Constantine in connection with some occasions of "transition" (baptism, marriage).

/273 cont./

751 used as such far back in Oriental antiquity. The blue ball is a protection
789 against the evil eye. (65) And the wing of the bat makes a man charging
(237)
(832)

65. See above the special section on this subject and the footnotes.

and insures his success in romance. (66)

(171)

66. The use of the bat for magical ends is encountered in several traditional Greek communities (Epirus, Crete, Thrace, etc.), especially to make sure of a person's love. See Ph. Koukoules: Ibid., vol. A. II, p. 230. According to this author, at Kallipolis in Thrace the rejected lover desiring to win the lady of his dreams, cuts the throat of a bat with a gold piece and puts its spinal column beneath the church altar. Success is assured if he manages to touch his beloved with this bone. The same practice existed in Byzantium: M. VASSIOU: Manuscript, p. 272.

(178) It seems that the Sarakatsani amulets testify to the survival of magico-religious beliefs of the east Mediterranean peoples, stored up in their souls in superimposed layers.

789 If Sarakatsani magic has to be very much concerned with children who
585 "perpetuate the race," it must likewise be solicitous of the couple who represent the foundation of society.

789 During the nuptials, at the moment when the groom appears at the
585 dwelling of his fiancée, the latter's mother puts a rope around him. Then she smacks his face and all his attendants dash toward him and smack him also. We must see in this treatment an act that has a double meaning.

(178) First, it is a survival of an ancient rite of flagellation with switches,
(85) aiming at fecundity and abundance. (67)

67. On ritual flagellation see: Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 190.

(176) And also it is a means of warding off the bad spirits and the harmful

789 /273 cont./

585 influences that ceaselessly threaten the well-being of men and, jealous,
1716 take advantage of moments of happiness to attack them. The smacks
transform what seems to be a festival into a brawl. (68)

68. This practice is a result of the anthropomorphic
form that the Sarakatsani give certain bad spirits.

789 That is why, in the course of the feast that follows the celebration of
784 the wedding, the Sarakatsani put on a dance performed by the men alone.
535 Two young men, suitably disguised, here represent the married couple. At
585 a given moment they withdraw from the dance and, in front of everybody,
simulate the sexual act, so that /274/ the evil spirits, deceived,
descend on them - with no harmful consequences - and spare the couple.

789 However, curative procedures, as such, are not lacking. It is very
825 advisable, for example, always to have on oneself something derived from
237 wild animals (skin of the hare, hairs of the wild boar, feathers of the
partridge, etc.). These animals that feed on all the plants and shrubs
of the field and forest transmit to men their admirable properties
(strength, resistance, speed, etc.) as well as the medicinal qualities of
their food. (69)

69. Van der Leeuw: *Ibid.*, p. 66: "The superiority of the
animal is quite evident. The animal has a power that is
lacking in man: muscular force, sharpness of vision,
keenness of smell, a sense of orientation..."

That is why honey is considered the best medicine because the bees gather

342 honey from all the flowering plants. When the building of a new hut is
789 finished, one does not move in before having lighted a fire in the hearth.
372 And if possible a priest is called to celebrate the office of the holy
water. These two procedures tend to assure the well-being of the family. (70)

70. In both cases one seeks to keep off evil influences.

That fire has warding-off properties against all evils that
try to enter a new dwelling before people do is a very

/275 cont./

233 Let us recall first that when they construct a new sheepfold the
789 Sarakatsani place there thorny shrubs which will threaten and repulse
824 the evil. (73)

(194)
73. We have spoken of this in connection with demons
and the kalikantzari. According to the Byzantine

M. VELAOT: Παρά Δαυταίος Αμπελιών, M. P. G. 132, p. 872,
one can conquer the demons...by using knives and needles,
for "they fear the points of iron objects." See also: A.
Métraux: Les Indiens Uro-Čipaya, p. 350: "The house is often
protected by a cactus..."

233 Moreover, the skull of the horse or a donkey is hung there for, the bone,
789 extremely solid matter, transmits its resistance to the flocks and protects
789 them further against the evil eye. (74)

74. A practice followed in many countries influenced by
Greek and Latin civilizations. See P. Deffontaines: Ibid.,
p. 40: "In Spain, South America, North Africa one very often
comes across skulls of cattle fastened to the house enclosure
to shield it from the evil eye...To bring fertility to the
orchard of the house, horses' skulls were used in Rome as
well as North Africa." It is very probable that the Sarakatsani
attributed this second significance to the skull.

(191)
233 The resistance of the livestock is further ensured by placing at the
789 entrance to the stroumgha a hatchet or a knife, hard objects that the
823 animals touch as they trample over them; this practice is analogous to
585 that which requires the newly-weds to walk on a metal object as they enter
their hut for the first time.

233 All these practices are solely preventive. With respect to the
789 curative aspect, and calling to mind the instance of Daoutis, we should
note the measures to be taken at the time of small pox epidemic among the
(194) animals. According to the findings of M. Skafidas, (75)

/351 cont./

757 in the course of three consecutive mornings at day break, stand in front of the door of the hut, his right hand as high as possible on the door jamb and his left hand as low as possible on the opposite upright. Then he must bend his trunk deeply three times. This exercise must be repeated several times in succession with the hands reversed.

757 /352/ There is another treatment of lumbago: the patient lies flat on his stomach on a "bed," and the healer starts to massage him. After that he takes hold of the patient's right hand and left foot and tries to join them above his back. He repeats the manipulation with the opposite limbs. These manipulations finished, the healer (237) applies on the painful spot a sort of poultice made from the lungs of a recently killed young goat, cut in pieces, soaked in alcohol, sprinkled with sugar and raised to the normal body temperature.

757 To heal the inflammation of ganglions in the groin, a heated wooden spoon is applied and the operation is repeated several times in succession while exorcisms are pronounced.

752 In case of scorpion bites it is necessary to rub the wound with the milk of the fig tree.

757 Finally, medicinal plants are used to combat fever, a cold, etc.

278 The rest of Sarakatsani therapy deals exclusively with curative magic. But one finds its presence everywhere be it only in the manner of administering treatment by rational means. The examples cited are evidence: the exercise against lumbago is done "at daybreak" and not during the day; the poultice is made with the lungs of kids and not of lambs; the treatment of glands involves exorcisms, etc.

* * * *

128 Having presented this data, we shall try to formulate certain ideas about Sarakatsani knowledge.

/374 cont./

534



Fig. 109

The tsiradi is a reduced flute, approximately 35 centimeters long. It is a portable instrument made of wood, metal or the long bones of the eagle (fig. 109). In the latter case the bones must remain 40 days in a church, before being used, for the birds of prey "are of the devil" and must therefore be purified. The tsiradi has but seven holes, on one side only. The sound it produces is rather shrill.

Formerly, the Sarakatsani also used the bourboule, an instrument bought commercially and consisting of two flutes joined. This instrument has today disappeared.

/375/

PART FOUR

/376/

REMARKS ON THE WHOLE

121 After the partial aspects, an introduction to the whole of Sarakatsani society and culture: a step all the more necessary since, in the world of socio-cultural phenomena, the whole far exceeds the simple sum of its parts.

In this section we shall not concern ourselves with what is external and apparent only secondary. We intend above all to try to fathom the inner composition, to show how the parts are concretely integrated.

But if we succeed in defining the process that leads to the integration of the parts into the whole, that is to say, in bringing to light how we pass from plurality to unity, we shall, at the same time, be in a position to explain and to understand the whole. More than that.